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NEEDS OF THE NEW SOUTH

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A prominent American said not long ago that a dollar was the most productive thing in the world. It is needless to say that he was a disciple of that doctrine which has given the dollar an adjective applied to only the King of kings, the *almighty* dollar, "greater than all things visible and invisible," immeasurable in quantity of results, infinite in accomplishment. But there is a fatal defect in the omnipotence of the dollar. It is material, and being material it is subject to the physical law of material things, action and reaction. The dollar on the stock exchange which makes a fortune to-day for Mr. Smith loses the same fortune for Mr. Jones, and when the sun goes down, there is no increase in assets. The happiness on the credit side of the exchange is offset by the misery on the debit side.

The most productive thing in the world, in fact, is not a dollar, or two dollars, or a million dollars; but it is something which is not material, it is the germ of that power which moves ships and trains, navies and armies, which builds empires and populates continents where formerly reigned only desolation and savage beasts and men; it is something which gives no promise in appearance of its possibilities, but it is alive and bristling with energy and horsepower; *it is a boy, and above all an American boy.*

In this connection it is well to come to the point of my subject and emphasize the needs of the New South. The New South? Why so called? Fifteen years ago a machine shop and foundry between Georgia and Alabama could not secure workmen or apprentices at more than living wages. The proprietor sent his son to the School of Technology in Atlanta, the young man went home, donned his overalls, and went to work in his father's shop. Since that time he has been able to employ any boy in the county at fifty cents a day. That county was regenerated in its ideas.

Twenty-five years ago it was impossible for a young man to wear overalls in the day and a dress suit in the evening. No such

false pride exists to-day. It is the desire of 100,000 young men in the South to become workers in mines, in factories, in mills. They realize the boundless resources of their section and are filled with ambition to perform great deeds in industry and progress. These facts give the cause for the name "New South."

The vast manufacturing interests of our cities, the application of scientific principles, the establishment of great power plants, the working of mines, the development of every natural resource with mechanical appliances, demand men—staunch, sturdy, powerful, workingmen—men who not only have the strength to do, but have the intelligence and training to do what is wisest and best.

Have we such men? No. Have we the facilities for training such men? No. These answers come from the shops, mills, power plants, and manufactories which are rising like magic in every Southern state. The future with its increasing markets, its tropical trade, its Panama Canal, its demand for manufactured articles from every shore touched by the waters of the Pacific, gives prophecy of still greater demands. Are the colleges and schools in the South adequately responding to the demand for such men? Not at all. In my state we are making ten professional men—lawyers, doctors, authors, teachers, statesmen if you will—where we are making one technically trained expert.

Not one blemish would I place on the fair names and splendid work of those universities and classical schools which are cherished in every state in the Southland, and from whose walls have come men renowned at home and abroad. But I would say to them, turn some of your influence and force towards the supplying of a great demand which we cannot meet. Such a course would not reflect upon your dignity nor tarnish your prestige. An eminent German scientist, on being asked how he would establish a great university, replied: "If I had sufficient means, I would equip some laboratories; if the money held out, I would erect some buildings; if there was still some money left, I would employ some professors."

The greatest boon which could come to the South to-day would be the establishment of shops and laboratories in every school and college from Pennsylvania to New Mexico. Even then the supply would not begin to approach the demand. During the month of April I have had at least ten applications for young men who knew something about boilers, or electricity, or mills. Three applications

came in one day for draughtsmen, at almost any price. To take a specimen application, the writer of which has evidently tried in vain for what he wants :

"DEAR SIR:—I am looking for a technical graduate to make himself generally useful to me, chiefly in experimental work and patent drawings. I really want to put him into training to become our factory superintendent, but it is probably not best to tell him so at first. Pay will be \$100.00 per month to start, but the specifications are not exacting. I want my man to know a lot of things. He must know how to get along with employees. He must have a natural inborn tendency to order, system and discipline, and he must have that mysterious quality 'accomplishfulness.' The ability to get through with work. The habit of despatch. He must also furnish his own 'push,' his own E. M. F. There are a good many men who are like Josiah Allen's dog. He said the dog was all right to chase cows, if you only ran on a little ahead to encourage him. This is not the kind of a dog or man I want. I *really* want (but do not expect to find him this side of St. Peter) a man who will run on ahead and encourage *me*. I believe in heredity, too, and I want the son of a mechanic. A young fellow who has been brought up in the brass belt of Connecticut would do. We are going into several new lines. Responsibility will come as fast as the young man can digest it, probably faster. Can you recommend anybody as approximating the specifications?"

The fact, then, needs no demonstration, that the facilities for turning out engineers, technical experts, etc., are inadequate. The remedy is the establishment of courses in engineering in every college, in every university. Yes, do more than establish the course, advertise it; make it as popular with the undergraduate as the classics. I have known of a college, having three hundred students, giving courses to two students in agriculture and a dozen in engineering. In such cases something is the matter with the engineering and agriculture, or, perhaps, with a false sentiment existing against them, the students are not to blame for such a condition. This would be a great advance in the higher education mostly needed in this section, and would be accelerated with experience.

But this would benefit the college boy only; it would not have an influence on the great majority of boys who are here now and who will continue to come, an innumerable host, eager to learn, willing to work, provided for in the common schools only, then brought face to face with the fact that many of us have had to face desperately, namely, self-preservation, or making a living.

It is almost an axiom that the boy who is poor to-day will be the influential factor in affairs of every description twenty-five years

in the future. If he has that advantage from his environment without opportunity, how much greater will be his advantage with ample opportunity? There will be more of him, more in him.

There should be established in every congressional district in the South a trade school for the practical instruction of boys from 14 to 18 years of age, in the ordinary trades and the particular arts and industries which flourish in his section. Such schools would be almost, if not quite, self-supporting, from the natural output of products. From such schools would pour a continuous stream of skilled workmen and artisans, in all the arts and trades, who could demand a minimum wage of \$2.50 per day. The fields of light employment offer little or no inducement. Women have come forward as assistants and employes in every branch of business, at a smaller salary than married men can afford to work for. And the boy of seventeen who cannot go to college or technical school, who has had no training for special work, is forced into the field of unskilled labor, and only the select may obtain employment on the street railways, the police force, and the fire department, at much smaller wages than the skilled workmen can command.

The trade schools should come quickly and must come. It will be an innovation with us. I do not believe there is a school in the South where a white boy can learn bricklaying, or plumbing, furniture making, or practical manufacturing in wood and metal, and clay, on a practical commercial basis. Our technical schools are sending out a few leaders—superintendents, scientists—who are not to form the rank and file of skilled labor. But the colored race is meeting this problem with abundant means, had for the asking. Their industrial schools are making skilled workmen who command good wages, and who are turned from employment by no false sentiment, by no prejudice. These schools are increasing in number and size. When the colored race all become skilled bricklayers, somebody will have to carry the mortar. When they all become plumbers, who are going to be the helpers, the men who carry the tools? When they become scientific farmers, who are going to be the laborers? We Southerners, we Southern whites? No. We have settled that question long ago, but, unless we have trade and industrial schools, our boys will have to carry the mortar for somebody, even if they have to emigrate to do it.

But I make no prophecy of ill-omen. Pointing at the spectre

does not imply embracing it or acknowledging its supremacy. The Southern people will, I feel sure, meet the issues which are forced upon them. They will provide for their sons in due season. And while some philanthropy fails to find its way here, unless there is something to give color to the question, our state government, our legislatures (and the General Education Board seems to be following the pathway blazed by our own people), bestowing benefits upon the white boy of the South, and at the same time lending a helping hand to the weaker race, will surely prepare means for their own sons for the preservation of the prestige of their inheritance, for the great destiny which beckons them to prepare for future conflicts in commerce, in science, in skill, and in art, with the greatest nations of the earth.